



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

Congratulations to the [Arizona Centennial Commission](#) for organizing an extraordinary Arizona Best Fest Celebration in Prescott!

The festival, held this past weekend, kicks off the Arizona Best Fest Series, as well as an active calendar of Arizona Centennial Signature Events and Projects in honor of our state's 100th anniversary of statehood.

The beautiful Prescott Courthouse Square and the city's surrounding historic downtown served as the event's backdrop, and included interactive historic pavilions, cultural villages, a western town, seven stages of entertainment, Arizona artists, food, wine, craft beer and much more. The event also served as the unveiling of the USPS Arizona Centennial Commemorative Stamp.

For those who couldn't attend the Prescott festival, don't you worry! The "best of" celebratory series moves to Tucson (January 20-22) and later to Phoenix (February 10-12) as it makes its three-city tour to Arizona's three territorial capitals. To learn more, visit www.az100years.org.

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

New Update to AOT's Research Web site!

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes July 2011](#)
- [2010 Arizona Domestic Visitation Profile - Total, Resident and Non-Resident](#)
- [2010 Arizona Domestic Visitation Profile - Total, Leisure and Business](#)
- [2010 Arizona Domestic Visitation Profile - Regional](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at melkins@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Discover America Day - Canada](#)

Date: October 3

Location: Toronto, ON

[Arizona Showcase](#)

Date: October 6

Location: Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

[Canada Trade Mission - East](#)

Date: October 11 -14

Location: Montreal, QB and Winnipeg, MB

Industry News

Arizona Restaurant Week September 17 - 25!

For the first time, Arizona Restaurant Week is going statewide so pack the car and ready your appetite. New to the dinner party, northern Arizona restaurants have grown into destinations of their own. More than 200 of the state's top dining spots are participating. For more information, visit www.arizonarestaurantweek.com.

First Bi-Annual CALA Festival Officially Begins September 2011

Over the course of the two-month valley-wide celebration, audiences and participants will enjoy the vibrant artistic, musical and culinary offerings of the regional Latino community through various exhibits, concerts, street fairs and more. CALA Alliance is an Arizona community-based organization dedicated to educating and inspiring all Arizonans about the richness of our Latino cultural heritage. Through festivals, performances, exhibits, in-school activities, food, music and events, we will all share in the joy and beauty of the cultural life of the Americas. The life we live throughout Arizona. Anchored by a bi-annual arts and cultural festival, Celebración Artística de

las Américas (CALA), will create shared arts experiences that encourage cultural understanding between people of the Americas. The inaugural CALA Festival will take place from September 14 through November 16, 2011, coinciding with Arizona's centennial celebration. For more information, visit www.calaalliance.org.

Travelocity Teams Up with Family Travel Expert to Find Out Where Families Would Go if Money Was No Object

Travelocity's most recent survey of customers found having kids doesn't have to mean the end of travel. In fact, it turns out families who travel with children are more likely to have dream vacations planned than those respondents who do not.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents to the survey have a dream trip they would take if money was no object. Of those, the majority (60 percent) stated that having an authentic, local experience was what mattered most on their dream trip. The other 40 percent said it was more important to experience the best service possible.

"It's telling that families who travel with children are more likely to have dream trips in mind than those who don't travel with kids," said Eileen Ogintz, family travel expert and author of the weekly syndicated column Taking the Kids. "They want to show children the world and know travel is the most wonderful gift you can give a young person. What families may not realize is their travel dreams are far more attainable than they may think."

In terms of the type of trip parents would like to take with their children, a tour of a foreign city came in on top with 37 percent of the vote. The second-most popular choice was relax on a beach (22 percent), followed by take a cruise (18 percent), visit a theme park (12 percent) and see exotic wildlife (11 percent).

"Given the fact that parents named having a local experience and touring a foreign city as key factors of their family dream trip, it's no surprise that Europe was the number-one destination they would pick," said Genevieve Shaw Brown, Editorial Director at Travelocity. "Fall is a perfect time to explore Europe, with lovely weather and fewer crowds. Top that off with cheap flights and hotel deals that don't exist in the summer months and suddenly a dream vacation is within reach." (*Travel Industry Wire, September 12*)

STR Reports US Hotel Pipeline for Aug. 2011

The total active U.S. hotel development pipeline comprises 2,951 projects totaling 315,668 rooms, according to the August 2011 STR/McGraw Hill Construction Dodge Pipeline Report. This represents a 12.4-percent decrease in the number of rooms in the total active pipeline compared to August 2010. The total active pipeline data includes projects in the In Construction, Final Planning and Planning stages, but does not include projects in the Pre-Planning stage.

Among the U.S. regions, three reported an increase of 20 percent or more in rooms under construction: Pacific (+38.9 percent with 4,260 rooms); East South Central (+32.2 percent with 3,611 rooms); and West North Central (+31.5 percent with 3,418 rooms). The Mountain region fell 45.7 percent to 3,158 rooms in the In Construction phase, followed by the West South Central region with a 43.8-percent decrease to 7,812 rooms in the In Construction phase.

“We continue to see a high number of rooms under construction in key U.S. markets such as New York, Orlando, Miami and Washington, D.C., that are adding to new supply in their respective regions,” said Duane Vinson, VP of client services at STR. “If you look at the number of projects (and rooms) in the overall Active Pipeline, however, it shows activity has slowed significantly in all areas.”

The Pacific region reported the largest decrease in rooms in the total active pipeline, falling 20.3 percent to 35,240 rooms, followed by the East North Central region (-14.6 percent with 24,517 rooms) and the East South Central region (-13.6 percent with 20,177 rooms). No U.S. regions showed positive growth in the pipeline. (*Hotel News Now, September 13*)

Survey Finds that Despite Recession-Unemployment, Travel Bookings Up

A new survey finds that traveler bookings are on the rise with Las Vegas, Orlando and Honolulu the top three domestic destinations being booked through the end of the year. Phoenix/Scottsdale finish out the top ten list.

When asked to compare booking thus far in 2011 compared to a year ago, 55.3 percent of those surveyed indicated that their bookings were higher, according to the Fall Travel Trends Survey from Travel Leaders Group. The Minnesota-based travel firm says about one quarter of those indicated that bookings were the same as compared to a year ago.

Among international travel, agents said a Caribbean cruise, followed by Cancun, Mexico and London were the top destinations being booked for the remainder of the year.

Here is a look at the rankings:

Domestic:

1. Las Vegas
2. Orlando, Fla.
3. Honolulu
4. New York City
5. Kahului (Maui), Hawaii
6. Washington
7. Chicago
8. Los Angeles
9. San Francisco
10. Phoenix/Scottsdale

International:

1. Caribbean cruise
2. Cancun, Mexico
3. London
4. Rome
5. Mediterranean cruise
6. Riviera Maya, Mexico
7. Paris
8. Montego Bay, Jamaica
9. Playa del Carmen, Mexico

10. Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
(*Travel Mole, September 13*)

International Travel Continues to Build

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, international visitors spent nearly \$12.5 billion on travel to, and tourism-related activities within, the United States during the month of June; up 9 percent over the same month in 2010, which marks the eighteenth straight month of growth in U.S. travel and tourism exports. International visitors have spent an estimated \$73.5 billion on U.S. travel and tourism-related goods and services year to date (January through June), an increase of 12 percent over last year. The U.S. travel and tourism industry is on pace for a record-setting year for travel and tourism-related exports. Americans have spent nearly \$53.6 billion abroad year to date (up 6 percent)—resulting in a \$19.9 billion trade surplus for travel and tourism through the first half of 2011. (*U.S. Travel Outlook Newsletter, September*)

DOT Reports 1.6 Percent Increase in U.S. Air Passengers in June

U.S. airlines carried slightly more passengers in June 2011 than they did the previous June, according to newly released data from the Department of Transportation. Airlines carried 66.1 million scheduled domestic and international passengers in June 2011, an increase of 1.6 percent compared to June 2010. The number of international passengers on U.S. carriers in June 2011 increased 1.7 percent over June 2010.

U.S. airlines carried 357.8 million total system passengers during the first six months of 2011, up 2.3 percent from the same period in 2010 and the highest January-June total since 2008. Systemwide, domestic and international load factors declined in June 2011 from June 2010 as airlines added capacity. For more information, visit www.dot.gov. (*Travel Pulse, September 15*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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